



Admiral's Corner
From Commander, Naval Safety Center



Taking the “O” out of ORM

We have spent the past 10 years working to incorporate Operational Risk Management (ORM) into every aspect of our military lives in an effort to protect and better utilize our nation's most precious assets—you and the equipment you work on. Our efforts have been rewarded with an overall decline in mishap rates, but we still have a long road ahead of us.

A safety-oriented cultural change of this magnitude takes time, but, as always, a single needless loss of life is one too many. As we continue to work toward our 50-percent mishap-reduction goal this fiscal year, it is time that we not only truly institutionalize ORM at work, but also take ORM off-duty. Risk management must be integrated throughout our entire life—not just in the work place.

Today, the greatest threat to our Sailors and Marines comes not from a terrorist bomb but the decisions they make while off-duty. Aside from war, traffic accidents are the No. 1 killer of enlisted Sailors and Marines, followed closely by suicide and off-duty recreation/home-related mishaps.

Of 1,071 safety-related deaths from FY00-04, 582 (54 percent) were PMV and 149 (14 percent) were off-duty recreation/home-related mishaps. So far in FY05, 26 (60 percent) PMV and 7 (16 percent) off-duty recreation/home-related mishaps have occurred as of Dec. 20, 2004.

A Sailor or Marine's chain of command must become involved in the off-duty lives of their personnel. An excellent mentoring program designed to involve mid-level enlisted leadership in the lives of their junior enlisted personnel was briefed at the recent flag-level safety council meeting. The 2nd MAW program shows the commitment we all must make to protect our personnel during their off-duty hours. The “Osama” poster on the next page has the link to the 2nd MAW presentation available on the Naval Safety Center website.

Whether we are taking a road trip, enjoying recreational sports, or relaxing with family and friends, we cannot afford to ignore the basic principles of risk management. We routinely should be asking ourselves, and our subordinate personnel, the following questions:

Are you well rested? Or, are you trying to make a long road trip by yourself, after a full day of work and through the night when your body is most likely to fall asleep?

Are you trained properly? Or, are you riding your friend's motorcycle/ATV without the proper safety equipment and knowledge needed to operate the vehicle safely?

Are you in good shape? Or, are you planning on making the PRT the next time you run 1.5 miles?

The challenge is for all of us to consider the consequences of our actions before we act, ask for help when needed, and make risk management a part of our daily lives and not just our “operational” military life.

During a recent senior enlisted safety conference, hosted by the Naval Safety Center, 28 Navy and Marine Corps leaders discussed ways to mitigate traffic and off-duty recreation/home-related mishaps. In an effort to “get back to the basics” with intrusive and proactive leadership, the following top-priority recommendations were developed:

- Identify high-risk personnel and routinely evaluate their status. Closely monitor their activities and provide specific counseling and guidance. Implement liberty-risk hours as necessary.

- Standardize out-of-bounds travel limitations for all personnel within the command during liberty time. Require leave chits if personnel are traveling beyond liberty limits. Change departure and return times on leave chits to allow personnel to depart at 1200 (vice 1600) and return at 1200 (vice 0730). This will facilitate personnel traveling during daylight hours when they are less likely to fall asleep at the wheel.

- Develop partnership with local police departments to facilitate notification of commands when personnel are ticketed for major traffic violations (speeding, reckless driving, and DUI/DWI), which require their participation in an AAA Driver Improvement Safety Course IAW OPNAVINST 5100.12G.

Whether it's personal pride in a job well done or simple self-preservation (protecting yourself from harm)—incorporating risk management into our on- and off-duty lives is beneficial to all of us, as well as to our commands. Stay safe!

RADM Dick Brooks